United Nations E/CN.6/2008/NGO/7

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
11 December 2007

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-second session
25 February-7 March 2008
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women

Statement submitted by New Japan Women's Association

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2008/1.

07-63672 (E) 040108

Statement

Since its foundation in 1962, the New Japan Women's Association (NJWA) has been working, among others, for the abolition of nuclear weapons, rights of women and children, and solidarity with women around the world for peace. As a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, NJWA has attended UN-sponsored World Conferences of Women and Sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Priority theme

On the priority theme of the 52nd Commission on the Status of Women, "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women," NJWA welcomes the fact that the Commission focuses on this theme for the first time. It looks forward to the Commission adopting policy recommendations with concrete action proposals, which will provide valuable input on gender perspectives to the discussions and outcomes in the follow-ups to the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development to be held in Qatar in 2008 and Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, in Ghana in 2008.

The Beijing Platform for Action called for sufficient resources to be allocated to national machineries for the advancement of women as well as to all institutions, as appropriate, that can contribute to the implementation and monitoring of the Platform for Action. However, at the five-year and ten-year reviews of implementation of the BPFA, as well as in the regular sessions of the Commission, it has been repeatedly pointed out that inadequate or lack of budgetary allocations and staffing to national machineries and other institutions has been one of the major obstacles to the implementation. Various international conferences, including those sponsored by the UN, have recognized the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women as critical to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and to the development of countries and regions. NJWA therefore urges governments, which bear the greatest responsibility of providing sufficient resources and political support to the implementation of policies and programmes for gender equality and women's empowerment, to incorporate gender perspectives into their budget policies, and to make their utmost effort, such as having dialogues with NGOs, to meet the prime and immediate needs of women.

As part of the negative impact of the globalization of economy, both developed and developing countries are facing the increasing gap between the rich and the poor, and the rapid growth in non-regular workers, particularly among women, which are now hampering governments', NGOs' and other actors' efforts for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. NJWA underscores the need for Member States to review their national policies on economy and employment as well as on Official Development Aid from a gender perspective, so as to effectively invest in women, who are the key players in development.

Review theme

The 52nd Session will also review the implementation of the agreed conclusions on "Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peacebuilding" adopted by the Commission at its 48th session in 2004. NJWA, as an NGO upholding freeing the world of nuclear weapons and war at the top of its agenda, calls for the establishment of an international order of peace based on the UN Charter. It urges the UN system and Member States to make serious efforts to implement Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

NJWA urges Member States in particular to work together to substantially reduce military spending. NJWA believes that this is an issue closely related with the priority theme of this session. While the international community is being challenged to deal with such pressing tasks as poverty, hunger, natural disaster and global warming, a colossal amount of the world's wealth is being spent on armament. As is widely recognized, women and children suffer most from the consequences of poverty and armed conflict. NJWA calls on Member States to demonstrate their political will to reallocate the valuable resources now spent for military purposes to addressing the human needs, for the benefit of all.

United Nations reform

NJWA would like to take this opportunity to voice, together with many women's organizations around the world, its call for a swift implementation of the recommendation made by the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and the Environment for the creation of an independent, stronger women's agency. The UN having a well-resourced women's entity headed by an Under-Secretary-General in place will be the best example of financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, which will encourage Member States to carry out policies at the national level. With regard to the establishment of the women's agency, including the nomination of an Under-Secretary-General who will run the architecture, NJWA emphasizes the need for the UN and Member States to have exchanges of opinions with different NGOs working on the ground and experts of various fields.

NJWA continues to work together with civil society, governments and international organizations including within the United Nations, toward the realization of a common goal of "gender equality, development and peace".

United Nations E/CN.6/2008/NGO/8

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Statement submitted by International Council of Women, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2008/1.

07-63684 (E) 311207

Statement

The International Council of Women (ICW) was founded in 1888, and is the first international women's organization to recognize that equality, development and peace are inextricably linked. We note that this year's priority theme, 'Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women', and the review theme, 'Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace building', are similarly connected. While much attention has been given to the priority theme, we feel that the review theme is being inadequately addressed. We therefore submit this statement with the hope that the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and member states can add more to the endeavour.

We see the themes at this session of the CSW as a means of implementing the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. With the raft of United Nations human rights treaties extant at this point in history, it is clear that the themes we are addressing are not new. We question whether or not it is a waste of time and resources for NGOs to repeatedly draft brief statements for the CSW each year instead of working together with the CSW to explore constructive ways to encourage the mustering of political will which is so essential for implementing the International Bill of Human Rights and the human rights treaties which would guarantee human rights for all and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

The *New York Times* reported that at the founding meeting of the ICW in 1888, Julia Ward Howe called the attention of ICW members to organization: "It is important for us to ascertain what organizations can and...can not do … One of the problems is the reconciliation of the far and the near, the regulation of relations between the particular and the general ... But as great names are often made to serve merely personal ends, there must be observation and suggestion between the central power and its distant representations." With this in mind, the ICW has, since its inception focused on both the global and the local, and this is especially important if we wish to speak of peace.

The ICW and its affiliated national councils immediately turned their attention to international arbitration as a crucial means of working towards the achievement of women's and, ultimately, human rights. The ICW contributed to the First Hague Peace Conference in 1899, and played a catalytic role in the Second Hague Peace Conference of 1907. Out of these conferences emerged the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA). ICW acknowledges the importance of the PCA, but also notes the words of ICW representative May Wright Sewall, who called for 'careful scrutiny' of all the means towards achieving peace which were before us. In this period of wide-ranging UN reform and discussions of 'gender architecture', we too must engage in such careful scrutiny. We therefore recommend the following:

1. That the CSW ask Member States and NGOs to explore, suggest and implement ways to overcome the obstacles to establishing universal human rights.

2. That the CSW at its 52nd session include a strong condemnation of slavery and child labor in its agreed conclusions and urge all states to take the necessary steps to ensure that slave labor and the trafficking of women and children will not be used as a means to finance development.

3. That the CSW turn its attention to the need to safeguard female human rights workers from persecution and all forms of violence. This will enable women living in hostile environments to fully participate in peace-building and the prevention, resolution and management of conflict.

4. That the CSW ask the Secretary-General to prepare a report for its 53rd session on the participation of women in the PCA, as the PCA is an important body for international dispute resolution.

5. That the CSW request UN Member States to implement Security Council resolution 1325 in its agreed conclusions.

6. That the CSW, in co-operation with NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, turn its attention to finding new ways for NGOs to contribute to its work in a timely and informed fashion.

United Nations E/CN.6/2008/NGO/9

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 December 2007

Original: English

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Statement submitted by African Action on AIDS, Associated Country Women of the World, Association for the Study of the World Refugee Problem, Center for Women, the Earth, the Divine, European Union of Women, Hadassah, International Alliance of Women, International Association of Democratic Lawyers, International Council of Women, International Council of Jewish Women, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Federation of Social Workers, International Federation of University Women, International Inner Wheel, National Council of German Women's Organizations, Pan Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association, Salvation Army, Servas International, Socialist International Women, Soroptimist International, Third World Movement against the Exploitation of Women, Women's International Zionist Organization, Women's Zionist Organization of America, Women's Federation for World Peace International, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2008/1

07-64902 (E) 210108

Statement

We, the undersigned international and national non-governmental organisations in consultative status with ECOSOC, members of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Status of Women, present to the 52nd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women the following statement for information and consideration:

Financing

The right to equality and the principle of non-discrimination are among the most fundamental elements of human rights. The empowerment of women and autonomy of women are essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration. The empowerment and autonomy of women are equally essential for achieving a society in which women and men are equal. However, women worldwide continue to suffer from all forms of discrimination and all too often from a complete lack of power, in particular the power of political participation and of decision-making in macro-economic policies. First and foremost, the strengthening of the UN Gender Architecture with a strong operational mandate at the country level to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women – and in particular the economic empowerment - at the local level has to become reality.

We, the members of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Status of Women, support the message of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women/New York to the Expert Group Meeting held in Oslo, in September 2007. In particular we wish to reiterate the need to tackle the critical issues, such as the invisibility of women's work in national budgets, economic costs of HIV/AIDS and tobacco, and poverty related to older women and the girl-child. To these critical issues we wish to add concerns for the situation of rural women.

Rural women are responsible for the largest part of rural and agricultural work, but do not constitute the majority of resource owners. According to FAO, women produce more than 50% of the food cultivated on the planet. Further to this, 70% of the poor in rural areas are women. They are experiencing progressive poverty by having less access to resources such as land, technology, markets, credit facilities and training, as well as to social services, such as education and healthcare.

We, the members of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Status of Women, urge governments

- To finance mentoring programmes for women in leadership skills, especially in the political arena, thus making use of the examples and experiences of women in high positions;

- To develop and implement policies and adequately resourced programmes to integrate, train and encourage women to participate in public life. These policies would include organisational, educational and logistical measures to allow women to lead a self-determined life;

- To progressively redirect at least 5% of national military expenditure to health, education and employment programmes aimed at eliminating gender disparity in society and empowering women through the promotion and protection of their political, social and economic rights;

- To implement the dual approach of gender mainstreaming and positive action in all policies, programmes and budgets, in order to clearly identify their effects on women and men;

- To focus on the economic empowerment of rural women and to allocate the necessary budgetary resources.

Peace

The Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security unanimously adopted on October 31 2000 (SCR 1325) represents a landmark in the fight for the recognition of the need to ensure the full and effective participation of women in such processes and at all levels. It also embodies the responsibility of its implementation throughout the UN System, in both its norm-setting and operational roles and activities.

In the course of the ongoing discussions concerning the UN gender architecture and women's machineries, the undersigned NGOs maintain that the systematic under-resourcing and the low priority given to gender equality policies, programme and activities have profound impacts on the effective implementation of SCR 1325, with grave consequences for the lives of women and girls everywhere, and especially in situations of violent conflict.

The undersigned international and national non-governmental organisations in consultative status with ECOSOC, members of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Status of Women therefore urge UN member states

- To strengthen and improve the implementation of SCR 1325 within the UN system, i.e. through the establishment of an independent, well-resourced women-specific entity with adequate stature, normative, operational and oversight capacity, led by an Under-Secretary General, and with a mandate to drive the peace agenda at all levels;

- To systematically conduct gender training, including about SCR 1325 within all UN headquarters and field staff;

- To ensure women's participation within the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in the formulation and implementation of peacebuilding strategies, and to adequately resource women-specific projects, through the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund.

The undersigned international and national non-governmental organisations in consultative status with ECOSOC, members of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Status of Women therefore urge governments;

- To develop national action plans for a speedy implementation of SRC 1325;
- To develop national rosters of potential women candidates for positions in the area of conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation processes, in particular for senior management position;
- To actively encourage the recruitment of women to field presences;
- To encourage and finance relevant training and educational programmes focusing on women and girls;
- To empower women's organisations and peace initiatives, including adequate funding.

United Nations E/CN.6/2008/NGO/10

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 December 2007

Original: English

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Statement submitted by National Alliance of Women's Organizations, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2008/1.

07-64912 (E) 170108

Statement

NAWO, the National Alliance of Women's Organisations, is an umbrella group representing and supporting women's organisations and individual members based in England. With a focus on gender and Europe, NAWO promotes gender equality and social justice utilizing the internationally agreed human rights instruments for all women. NAWO works alongside sister organisations in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland as the United Kingdom Joint Committee on Women, the national body of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland representing the concerns and needs of women in the United Kingdom at the European Women's Lobby.

In this, the 52nd meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women, the theme, "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women" addresses one of the core challenges facing those working for the advancement of women: the availability of sufficient resources to ensure positive sustainable change. NAWO believes that at this juncture it is crucial to make funding and resources more readily available towards initiatives which promote women's equality on all levels: internationally, nationally and locally. NAWO supports the strengthening of a single UN entity working for gender equality and women's empowerment. We believe that a well-resourced and funded UN women's entity will significantly contribute to the promotion of gender equality and women's rights, and, comprising OSAGI, DAW and UNIFEM, will provide pioneering research, programs and initiatives that support member states and women's organisations across the globe.

In this way, the UN's resources should be spread more equally to enhance women's status. To ensure this is the case, NAWO calls on the UN to undertake gender budgeting itself – that is, to assess the impact of its allocation of resources on both women and men, boys and girls and to analyse the total amounts committed to women's equality globally. NAWO also supports initiatives to promote gender responsive budgeting and analysis by governments, thereby ensuring equality of access to public resources.

Gender budgeting requires action to be taken to encourage and promote women's participation in budgetary debates and decision-making. The under-representation of women within the UN and on other bodies is a reflection of continuing inequality between women and men and of women's lower status within societies globally.

NAWO further calls on the United Nations within its own system and on Governments - in particular, European governments - to require public and private bodies to appoint qualified women at Board and other senior levels, using quotas or other specific incentives and sanctions, in order to achieve gender balance (40% minimum women, 40% minimum men and no more than 60% of either sex), thus increasing democratic decision-making.

NAWO is pleased to see that the review theme is the role of women in peace building, peace keeping, and conflict prevention, and NAWO would like to draw attention to the disparity between the rhetoric of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the reality of implementation.

Equal participation of women and men in peace building at all levels needs to be addressed urgently. NAWO is particularly concerned that this is recognised and rectified in the areas of women in key position such as peace negotiations and peace missions.

NAWO calls on the United Nations system in and through all its bodies and agencies to assist with technical expertise in ensuring disaggregated statistics are collected to enable gender impact assessment in the area of peace building. Information gained in this way must be made available to governments so that steps may be taken to mitigate detrimental impacts.

NAWO further calls on governments – both from north and south – to encourage girls to pursue formal education, to train both women and men so that they understand the gendered nature of conflict especially violence against women and girls, and to ensure equal numbers of women take leadership roles, with the skills necessary for negotiation and conflict resolution.

NAWO calls on States Parties, the UN and civil society to work together towards the goal of gender equality as it affords both women and men enhanced lives, increased prosperity and greater opportunities.

United Nations E/CN.6/2008/NGO/11

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 December 2007

Original: English

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Fifty-second session
25 February-7 March 2008
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
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Statement submitted by the Coalition against Trafficking of Women, the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Congregations of St. Joseph, the Dominican Leadership Conference, International Council of Jewish Women, Loretto Community, National Council of Women of the United States, Sisters of Mercy, Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, UNANIMA International, VIVAT International, and the Worldwide Organization for Women, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2008/1.

07-64946 (E) 160108

Statement

Beginning with the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) and in the years since then, governments have made many commitments to end discrimination against women and to provide financing for gender equality. Yet, we see that the global phenomenon of the feminization of poverty continues and that, if anything, the economic gap between genders is increasing. Such an increased gap gives men even greater economic power, which underpins systemic discrimination against women, exploitation, and supports the global patterns of trafficking and prostitution.

We, NGOs in consultation with UN, long for the day when "the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of individuals will not be determined by the fact of being born male or female," as the United Nations Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues describes gender equality. We support and work in grassroots gender empowerment activities toward that stage of human social development when both women and men have the same possibilities of realizing their full potential.

Achieving gender equality is essential not only for the benefit of women, but for the benefit of all peoples and each nation. Development economist Amartya Sen affirms that women are now often viewed as passive recipients of help, rather than dynamic promoters of positive social transformation. Our experiences as NGOs working to empower women across the globe support this claim. Evidence suggests that education, employment and ownership rights of women (or lack thereof) are powerful determinants of women's ability to control their environment and contribute to economic development.

Linked with the above phenomena, which result in the rights of women not being respected to the same degree as the rights of men, we NGOs supporting global human rights are especially aware of the perverse and heinous phenomenon of the trafficking of women and children. Its incidence increases each year even as macroeconomic policies promise economic growth. Nothing casts women and girls as passive objects to be discriminated against more than being exploited as consumer chattel within an economic and social system that denies them equality.

We deplore this violence and this discrimination against women and we find ourselves obliged to point out the benefit to all of us that would come from strong actions and supportive policies to finance for gender equality as a tool to reducing human trafficking and the commodification of women and children through prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation.

A major root cause of the trafficking of women for labour or sexual exploitation is the vulnerability created by poverty. According to the most recent report on Global Trafficking Patterns from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime "most identified human trafficking victims have been women and children who seem to be particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation." According to the 2007 Trafficking in Persons report published by the United States Department

of State, "Approximately 80 percent of transnational victims are women and girls and up to 50 percent are minors."[1]

Reducing women's economic vulnerability will reduce the push factors for trafficking and the prostitution of women. It is an obvious conclusion that funding for education and funding for decent jobs with adequate compensation to provide for the needs of oneself and one's family — is essential to reducing the trafficking of girls and women. This calls for no more than the fulfilment of MDGs 1 and 3, which seek to ensure food, shelter, clothing, safe environment, and health care — all basic elements for a secure social environment.

The economic participation of women — their presence in the workforce of the formal sector as well as unpaid domestic labour — is important not only for lowering the disproportionate levels of poverty among women, but also as an important step toward raising household income and encouraging the development of national economies.

Amartya Sen makes a compelling case for the notion that societies benefit by seeing women as dynamic promoters of social transformation. Economic participation concerns not only the actual number of women participating in the labour force, but also their remuneration on an equal basis. Worldwide, outside of the agricultural sector, in both developed and developing countries, women are still averaging slightly less than 78% of the wages given to men for the same work, a gap which refuses to close in even the most developed countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

We recommend that governments:

1. Include labour policy that prioritizes the development of decent jobs and adequate compensation for women. Such policy will reduce their vulnerability to exploitation through human trafficking and prostitution.

2. Commit to an agenda, developed with the participation of women who have been economically marginalized, for women's empowerment. Such an agenda must specify policies, programmes and allocation of resources.

3. Conduct public awareness campaigns that

a) ensure that women and girls know about the options that are available to them through such programmes, and

b) commit to zero tolerance, in attitudes and policies, toward gender discrimination, particularly toward tolerating women being used as objects to be prostituted and/or trafficked.

[1] http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2007/82799.htm. Introduction.

4. Regulate trade policy and business practices so that corporations take into account financing for gender equality principles. The business sector must ensure that women have decent work with equal benefits. Regulations must also ensure freedom from discrimination and harassment in the workplace.

5. Require governments to integrate a gender analysis into the negotiation stages of bilateral, regional and multilateral trade agreements so that trade liberalization factors associated with the push towards the trafficking of women are evaluated and eliminated. In some cases this may even result in incentives for corporations which ensure decent work and compensation for women at all levels of their operations.

6. Promote government ratification of the Migrant Worker's Convention.

7. Develop mechanisms of financing for gender equality which support government actions to

a) ensure that anti-poverty aid programmes fully integrate a gender perspective into their work, for example, by supporting micro-trade and micro-finance programmes targeting women at risk of being trafficked and by focusing on implementing the MDGs.

b) offer support and technical assistance to bring about the reduction of new AIDS infections by eliminating sexual exploitation of women and children through human trafficking and prostitution.

c) strengthen legal and social support networks for women who have been trafficked.

d) affirm and encourage government partnerships with NGOs that have unique expertise in the work of combating trafficking and prostitution of women and supporting victims of trafficking.

United Nations E/CN.6/2008/NGO/12

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 December 2007

Original: English

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Fifty-second session
25 February-7 March 2008
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
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Statement submitted by African Women's Development and Communication Network, Amnesty International, Asia Pacific Women's Watch, Association for Women's Rights in Development, Center for Women's Global Leadership, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Network Women In Development and Europe, Women's Environment and Development Organization, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2008/1.

07-64952 (E) 170109

Statement

The global campaign for Gender Equality Architecture Reform welcomes consideration of "financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women" as the priority theme for the 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

We welcome also statements by the Secretary-General and member states in support of strengthening the UN's gender equality architecture.

The campaign for Gender Equality Architecture Reform, now comprising 82 organizations in over 35 countries, believes that the creation of a stronger UN entity for women will greatly advance gender equality, the empowerment of women and their human rights throughout the world.

For the past three decades, the UN has been a galvanizing force in efforts to define a comprehensive global agenda for peace and security, human rights, gender equality, women's empowerment, poverty eradication and sustainable development. As a result, there have been significant advances for women, including through the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Summit, and various UN agencies have done important work on specific aspects of gender equality.

The UN, however, still lacks an effective mechanism to deliver on many of the essential commitments made. It has several small under-resourced agencies focused exclusively on women's issues, and other larger agencies make critical contributions to women's human rights and gender equality, but it is usually a small part of their mandate, and often receives low priority.

As the Secretary-General has already stated on 25 November 2007, a stronger United Nations entity for women should be able to "call on all of the United Nations system's resources in the work to empower women and realize gender equality worldwide" and "mobilize forces of change at the global level, and inspire enhanced results at the country level."

The campaign for Gender Equality Architecture Reform therefore calls on member states of the UN, with the support of the women's movement, to act now to create a stronger United Nations entity for women.

- An Under-Secretary-General should head this entity for women, to ensure the necessary status required for representation and decision-making at the highest levels both in policy-development and program operations at the global and country levels. The new Under-Secretary-General post would provide higher level leadership than at present to more effectively drive the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda.

- Extensive field presences and a strong policy and programmatic mandate is essential for a strengthened UN entity for women to effectively improve the lives of women on the ground.

- Substantial and predictable resources to ensure that the new entity for women has the capacity to meet expectations and deliver results at all levels. It must be funded initially at a minimum level of $500 million to $1 billion USD with increases over time.

- Accountability within the new entity for women, at both national and international levels, including through meaningful involvement of civil society, in particular non-governmental organizations for women.

- The new entity should also promote gender mainstreaming by the integration of gender equality and women's human rights throughout the UN and especially in the UN Country Pilot projects and in all UN reform processes.

Strengthening the UN's gender equality machinery is a crucial part of financing for development. It will better enable the UN and governments to deliver on promises made to advance gender equality and women's human rights at the global and country levels.

United Nations E/CN.6/2008/NGO/13

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 December 2007

Original: English

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Statement submitted by Association for Women's Rights in Development; Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd; Flora Tristán Peruvian Women's Center; International Alliance of Women; International Council for Adult Educations; International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation; International Trade Union Confederation; International Women's Anthropology Conference; International Women's Tribune Centre; Network Women in Development Europe; Public Services International; UNANIMA International; Women's Environment and Development Organization, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

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* E/CN.6/2008/1.

07-64958 (E) 170108

Statement

Introduction

In the Monterrey Consensus adopted at the International Conference on Financing for Development in 2002, UN Member States made a number of commitments to mobilize and allocate resources for achieving sustainable development, poverty eradication, gender equality and the empowerment of women. They committed to mainstreaming "the gender perspective into development policies at all levels and in all sectors"[para 64], and to reinforcing national efforts aimed at formulating "social and gender budget policies" [para 19]. Current preparations for the follow-up review Conference scheduled to take place in Doha in 2008 provide an opportunity to assess progress in meeting these commitments.

Much of the development literature suggests that initiatives on gender equality and women's empowerment have not been effectively mainstreamed into development processes, while women's machineries and programmes, and the women's movement, have been grossly underfunded. These proposals highlight a set of key policy issues that need to be addressed within the financing for development review process in order to reverse this disastrous trend, and provide adequate funding and policy support for the social sectors and for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Mobilizing domestic resources

Taxation

1. In keeping with pro-poor strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), governments should give priority to strengthening tax administrations and tax collection systems, focusing on progressive direct taxation on wealth and capital assets rather than VAT on essential consumer items needed by low-income earners, a majority of which are women. It should be further recognized that women make significant contributions to care giving from earned income. The Committee of Experts on International Cooperation on Tax Matters should study this gender-differentiated dimension of household spending with a view to making recommendations for suitable tax breaks for women, in order to take this into account.

Budgets

2. In national policies, priority should be given to effective resource allocations for achieving the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals, including:

- full and productive employment and decent work;
- ensuring access to basic utilities and social services for all;
- ensuring that women have equal access to employment opportunities and labour market services, and to social services.

3. Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) should be adopted as a key tool in national development strategies, with a view to ensuring that adequate resources,

whether from external aid or domestic revenue, are channelled towards fulfilling international gender equality and human rights commitments as set out in the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and ILO Conventions 100 and 111 on non-discrimination in employment. GRB as a mechanism for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in national policies and programmes requires specific budgetary allocations, increased funding and a strengthened mandate for national women's machineries to build capacity, implement GRB initiatives, and to monitor and evaluate gender equality outcomes. Funding and support are required for adequate gender analysis for effective policy decisions on the financing of gender programmes.

Accounting for unremunerated work

4. Governments must use methods to measure women's unpaid work and its contribution to the national economy through developing and implementing time-use surveys to make visible the number of hours women spend working versus the actual income or payment they receive for their work. These methodologies should be assumed by the National Statistics Offices at the country level as an instrument to measure poverty, and the results should be included in the National Accounts Systems (ECLAC Quito Consensus 2007).

5. These contributions should be costed as investments to the national economy and used as a basis for providing matching funds for income generating activities, for social services and direct support to the care economy, thereby effectively transferring women's work from the non-cash to the cash economy.

Mobilizing international resources

6. The expansion and integration of global markets have not been matched with sufficient protection for the workers and communities that are the victims of human and trade union rights violations. We consider that a strengthened global regulatory framework incorporating human rights, labour and environmental standards is necessary in order to strengthen the protection of human and workers' rights, promote gender equality objectives, and safeguard the environment. Such a framework would draw on the relevant UN and ILO normative instruments, and provide a common approach to addressing both transnational business operations and foreign direct investment. We welcome governments' public affirmation of the need for such standards.

Remittances

7. Recognizing the significant contributions made by migrant remittance flows to financing development, measures should be adopted to reduce transfer costs and avoid double taxation of migrants in host and sending countries. Development policies should be underpinned by a rights-based approach which protects the rights of migrant workers, a large proportion of whom are women.

Trade

8. Governments must undertake gender-impact assessments and reviews of bilateral, regional and international trade agreements, in order to identify and redress gender biases in earning levels, job security, conditions of work, unpaid work burdens and access to productive and natural resources. These assessments and reviews should also be applied to sector reforms promoted and financed by multilateral institutions.

Official development assistance

9. Government commitments to reach and maintain the UN target of 0.7% of GNI in ODA should be adhered to, and a significant share of ODA should be targeted for women's empowerment and gender equality. Institutional frameworks at national levels and among international aid agencies should be engendered and strengthened with a view to improving aid effectiveness, accountability and benchmarking for the achievement of gender equality outcomes. Aid policies and programmes should adhere to the principles of national country ownership and participation of civil society, including women's organizations in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring of results.

10. Within the framework established by the Paris Declaration, there exists a notable lack of gender analysis and participation of civil society organizations. Particularly absent are those organizations addressing the issues of gender equality and the feminization of poverty. Donor budget support and sector programmes are frequently dependent on macroeconomic conditionalities that aggravate gender inequities. Moreover, the harmonizing of donor practices for programme-based support will most likely result in less space for innovative approaches and therefore the dilution of gender policies at the ground level.

11. It is essential to promote an aid architecture that is sensitive to the realities of those historically bypassed as recipients and without participation in the process. Real "country ownership" must be the result of consistent participation on the part of civil society organizations, particularly women and marginalized groups, who are most affected by poverty.

External debt

12. Given that current debt-restructuring approaches have not liberated resources for development and that in heavily indebted poor countries poverty is an epidemic affecting the majority of people, most acutely women and children, 100% debt cancellation is necessary and overdue. Further, governments should initiate a new and genuine policy space on debt to enable countries to overcome debt distress. Current policy space is conditioned by current debt relief mechanisms which do not recognize past failures of heavily indebted poor countries. Genuine policy space should be built around analysis that provides additional resources to help countries meet the Millennium Development Goals and Beijing Platform for Action (see report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to and outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development (A/62/217, paras. 97-102)).

Systemic issues

UN gender equality architecture

13. Governments must support a stronger gender equality architecture at the UN to enable governments and the UN system to better achieve their commitments to gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights. The proposed new women's entity needs a strong, combined mandate on normative and operational functions to ensure effective delivery, including through the expansion of its programmes on the ground to improve women's lives. Donors should commit to mobilizing the resources required to fund the new entity at a minimum level of $500 million.

United Nations E/CN.6/2008/NGO/14

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 December 2007

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-second session
25 February-7 March 2008
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women

Statement submitted by the International Union of Psychological Science, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2008/1.

07-64964 (E) 140108

Statement

The NGO Committee on the Family is committed to addressing family issues and policies and to playing a role in the advancement of families within the context of the United Nations system.

Strengthening the family, the basic unit of society, promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women. Providing families and especially women with the necessary financial opportunities and resources is an important step in empowering women to achieve equal status with men in the family and to decrease discrimination and violence against women.

We recommend that:

- Goals of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action should be implemented with consideration of the family.
- Families should receive comprehensive protection and support from member states in creating environments of gender equality for girls and women, which will promote educational and economic achievements.
- Innovative funding sources, constructive policy initiatives, and new partnerships that specifically target families should be developed between civil society, industry and member states.
- Women should play an instrumental role in all policy development and decision-making, especially as it affects their economic lives.
- The Commission on the Status of Women should support an increase in the allocation of funding from member states and from organizations that promote the development of businesses for women. This can make it possible for women to gain independence and self-esteem, and to serve as role models in their families.
- Women should receive training and support in learning how to budget for family needs such as food, health care, and education.
- Investment in research-based "best practices", such as UNIFEM's micro-credit financing programs, should be enhanced. Such programs have measurably improved women's economic self-sufficiency, which supports their families and their greater communities.
- Member states should improve gender-responsive budget allocations and tracking methods for more effective financial accountability, and funding should specifically be allocated to programs that support women and families.
- It should be recognized that the strengthening of women in families is an important pathway by which economic independence and equality for women can be achieved in society.

Note: Statement endorsed by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: Child Welfare League of America, International Council of Psychologists, International Federation for Home Economics and World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations

United Nations E/CN.6/2008/NGO/15

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 December 2007
English
Original: Spanish

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-second session
25 February-7 March 2008
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women

Statement submitted by the National Women's Council of Catalonia (CNDC), a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

Statement

Budgets are a vital tool enabling Governments to establish strategies to implement their policies and achieve their economic and development objectives. Knowledge of how the resources of a country, region or population are allocated, managed and verified will enable us to discover the priorities that have been established; what is being spent, what it is being spent on and how it is being spent; who is appreciated and who is not; and what work is rewarded and what work is disregarded.

Government budgets are not gender neutral, since they have a different impact on women and men, and also on different groups of women and men. Men and women have different and unequal economic and social positions. Thus, ignoring gender differences when budgets are prepared will only perpetuate discriminatory differences and deepen the existing gap between men and women. This will lead us to place too much emphasis on economic values that do not take into account, for example, all the unpaid work done by women.

* E/CN.6/2008/1.

07-64970 (E) 040108 180108

Good budgetary policies require both an understanding of the impact that they will have and a rational design in order to satisfy all groups of women and men in an equal and fair manner. An impartial budget will consider the different needs, privileges, rights and obligations that women and men have in society, as well as the contributions that they make to the production of goods and services and to how resources are distributed.

Government budgets must take into consideration the value of all types and conditions of unpaid work done by women, primarily in households and in the community; work which, quite frankly, has not been considered as work until now. However, if budgets are implemented based on a theoretically traditional approach that excludes and ignores household work, care work, reproductive work and so forth — since only investment and consumption are taken into account and the importance of social issues is downplayed — then women will continue to be marginalized and gender inequality will increase.

In keeping with its commitment to incorporate a gender perspective into all of its policies and actions, the Catalan Government is providing sex-disaggregated economic data and is also developing the foundations for the implementation of gender budgets in all areas. Thanks to these efforts, we can note, for example, that expenditures on specific sports activities for women and girls account for only 1.2 per cent in the 2005 sports budget of the Catalan Sports Council (CCE) of the Government of Catalonia.[1] Economic measures are therefore needed to correct this situation.

Mention should also be made of the development of the "Satellite Account of Household Production (CSPD)",[2] an exhaustive study which provides a more complete and comprehensive picture of the economic reality of the country because, for the first time, it places an economic value on household work. This study considers households as producers and not only as consumers. It also quantifies time and gives a monetary value for the unpaid work done in Catalonian households.

Thanks to the study we can assert that if we attributed an economic value to household work, the Gross Domestic Product of Catalonia would increase by 40 per cent (a percentage which is consistent with the results of studies in other countries: the United States of America, Finland, Switzerland and Norway).

Family household work in Catalonia is equivalent to 112.3 per cent of market work time. Women's work accounts for 72 per cent of this time. It is essential to value this work in order to change perceptions to show that society appreciates such work and to bring about equity in the share of work.

The National Women's Council of Catalonia (CNDC), in our capacity as the participative and consultative body of the Catalan Institute for Women, comprises 303 women's entities and groups from all over the territory of Catalonia. Our diversity is shown by who these women are: migrant women, women with disabilities, old and young women, and professional women of all profiles. We

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[1] Núria Rodríguez Planas. *Protocol d'anàlisi de la despesa pública des de la perspectiva de gènere* (Protocol for analysing public expenditure on the gender perspective). Government of Catalonia. Catalan Institute for Women.

[2] Cristina Carrasco Bengoa and Mònica Serrano Gutiérrez. *Compte satèl•lit de la producció domèstica (CSPD) de les llars de Catalunya 2001. Government of Catalonia, 2001.* Catalan Institute for Women.

believe that initiatives to set budgets from a gender perspective promote the transparency of the budgetary process and achieve a higher level of efficiency and effectiveness in public expenditure management. This is not a magic formula but it will enable us to outline the structural changes necessary for the achievement of de facto equal opportunities for men and women.

CNDC therefore calls for the implementation of gender budgets as useful tools:

- For making Governments and society at large aware of the impact of budgets on gender;
- For evaluating whether Governments are meeting their commitments to women's policies; and
- For changing policies and budgets with the aim of improving the economic and social situation of women.

United Nations E/CN.6/2008/NGO/16

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 December 2007

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-second session
25 February-7 March 2008
Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Statement submitted by American Psychological Association, International Association for Women's Mental Health, International Association of Schools of Social Work, International Council of Psychologists, International Council of Women, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Federation of Social Workers, International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, International Federation of Women Lawyers, International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, International Union of Psychological Science, Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women, National Council of Women of the United States, Soroptimist International, World Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation, World Federation for Mental Health and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2008/1.

07-64977 (E) 170108

Statement

We, the international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and members of the NGO Committee on Mental Health, affiliated with the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO) in consultative relationship with the United Nations, are committed to the promotion of mental health, psychological and societal well-being, the prevention and treatment of mental illness and emotional distress, and the improvement in the delivery and quality of mental health services through advocacy and education at the United Nations. Historically, mental health has been overlooked or minimized in discussions at the UN. The importance of maintaining full mental health for all people is recognized by the World Health Organization in its Constitution when it states that "*health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity; the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition*; and that *the health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security and is dependent upon the fullest cooperation of individuals and States.*"

The NGO Committee on Mental Health and other NGO colleagues affiliated with the Economic and Social Council recognize the crucial role of "financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women" of all ages in achieving optimal human development and human rights. Mental health, so dependent upon economic, social and political forces, is essential to realizing that goal. Because of the broad range of concerns that challenge women, financing the promotion of psychosocial well-being must be embedded in activities designed to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. These activities must address the following:

- systemic discrimination and violence across the life span;
- limited access to appropriate and affordable mental and physical health care;
- limited access to education;
- inequitable social development;
- economic injustice and poverty;
- limited attention to their post-conflict and disaster needs; and
- denial of their human right to peace, security and protection.

Recommended Action Priorities

Fiscal policies have been inattentive to these challenges, and allocation of funds has been grossly insufficient. The following action priorities are designed to address financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women to correct this reality:

- Civil society must work to accelerate the implementation at local, regional and national levels of all previous international commitments at local, regional and national levels, enhancing the capacity to mainstream the financing of gender-sensitive mental health issues;

- Women must play an instrumental role in all policy development, decision-making and program implementation;
- Governments must improve gender responsive budget allocations and tracking methods for more effective financial accountability and funding streams dedicated to crucial educational and mental health needs of women across the life-span;
- Innovative funding strategies, constructive policy initiatives and new partnerships among civil society, industry and governments must be identified to redress devastating social inequities and close the huge financial gaps between men and women;
- Investment in research-based "best practices," such as UNIFEM's microcredit finance programs, must be increased.

Ending economic dependency and poverty are fundamental steps in promoting human psychological stability and independent life-skills, as well as increasing women's self-esteem and future leadership capabilities. Economic self-sufficiency improves access to educational opportunities and quality mental and physical health care. Research suggests that financial support of women not only measurably improves their overall well-being, but has a positive effect on their families and communities.

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